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Santa Rosa County
Cooperative Extension Service

4-H County Events Not Just a Contest

Do you know how to build a model rocket, take a great picture or prepare a nutritious snack? Do you want to know how 4-H can positively influence the life of a child or do you just enjoy watching a child do a “song and dance?” Then 4-H County Events is just the thing for you. You can see these things and so much more as 4-H members from ages 5 to 18 do demonstrations, give speeches, perform in a talent show and participate in a variety of other events.

4-H County Events are more than just contests. They provide youth with an opportunity to “show and tell” what they have learned in their 4-H project work, develop self esteem, develop life skills, express themselves and be recognized for their efforts.

When the 4-H year begins each September, 4-H members select one or more 4-H -projects to work on during the year. The variety of projects ranges from the traditional and rural “cows and cookin” to the more modern and urban aerospace, marine science and photography. But, the variety of 4-H projects is a story for another day. The important thing is that the child is able to select a project of his or her choice, a project that they will enjoy doing, and want to learn more about.

Throughout the year 4-H members work on their projects in 4-H club meetings and independently. They “learn by doing” as they complete suggested activities, experiments, attend workshops and participate in 4-H programs. Most projects require the youth to do some independent study and research. All 4-H projects have a form on which the youth records the progress of their project.

One of the most unique features of the 4-H program is “County Events.” No matter what project the child has chosen, every 4-H member is encouraged to share what they have learned by participating in this activity.

At 4-H County Events 4-H members may do a demonstration, give a speech, participate in a fashion show or perform in a talent show. There are more than thirty different categories of events. In several of the categories the 4-H'er may participate as an individual or work as part of a team. County Events are an excellent way for 4-H'ers to develop self esteem and be recognized and rewarded for their efforts.

Every child who participates in 4-H County Events receives an award. The judging system that is used provides for the awarding of blue, red or white ribbons to each child, based on the quality of their presentation. First, second and third place presentations are recognized and the first place winner in each of the events will advance to the 4-H District Events. This year they will be held in Okaloosa County on May 6, 2000.

While some may question the competition, it is recognized that we all need a carrot dangled in front of us from time to time. Sometimes we need a reason to get moving and a purpose for doing. In 4-H County Events every child is a "winner." The goal is to encourage each child to do his/her best as they "learn by doing" and to recognize their efforts.

Many of the best presentations begin at the 4-H club level where the 4-H'er has been given the opportunity to share what they have learned with their friends, 4-H leader and parents. Their "show and tell" presentation is developed into a demonstration or speech. As the 4-H'er works on their presentation, incorporating the suggestions of their club leader and other members, they polish their skills and improve their presentation.

The most important purpose of 4-H County Events is not winning, being first or receiving a blue ribbon. It is the opportunity for a child to participate and to be recognized for what they do. The fact is, by making an attempt and participating they will "learn by doing." The skills that they learn in preparing and making a presentation are skills that they will use throughout life.

4-H programs and activities in Santa Rosa County are open to boys and girls ages 5 to 18 regardless of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex or handicap. For more information about 4-H contact in your county [Vickie B. Mullins, Santa Rosa County 4-H Coordinator, at 623-3868 or 939-1259, Ext. 1360 (for south county residents)].